

law. Discrepancies between what a person claims their income is and what is received from trusted data sources must now be off by 25 percent. Previously, it was 10 percent in order for the administration to investigate a possible fraud. So I guess you can be fraudulent up to 24.9 percent now. The administration should not be lowering the standard by which it verifies eligibility for folks to receive our scarce taxpayer dollars. It is unacceptable for implementation of this law to further burden taxpayers by failing to protect against fraud and abuse.

Another recent regulation gets at one of my biggest fears from the law's passage: the ability of the government to ration care. There were four provisions of this law that I believed would decrease individual choice and open the door to rationing, one of which was the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation, CMMI. In March, this outfit passed a proposal to test, as the agency calls it, how we pay for prescription drugs for our seniors under Medicare Part B. Patient groups, doctors, and many of us in Congress are gravely concerned about how this test could affect the patient's quality of and access to care. As the Kansas Medical Society explained to me, this so-called demonstration "will force Kansas Medicare beneficiaries with serious, sometimes life-threatening conditions to participate, disrupt their treatment processes, and impede their access to needed medications with no evidence of improved health outcomes or financial gains for the Medicare system." Such a so-called test is now allowable because of the rationing provisions of ObamaCare.

The law is simply not working for the large majority of Americans. Insurers are pulling out, citing large losses in covering the population of people who are seeking coverage on the exchanges. So Americans are left with fewer options in selecting their health care coverage, and, most concerning, they are paying more for it—a lot more.

Looking back to December of 2015 when this body sent legislation to the President's desk to repeal ObamaCare, the President's Statement of Administration Policy stated simply, "The Affordable Care Act is Working." Yet, last month the President wrote in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* that "too many Americans still strain to pay for their physician visits and prescriptions, cover their deductibles, or pay their monthly insurance bills." That is a true statement. I thank the President for waking up to this nightmare.

Despite his new revelation that the Affordable Care Act is, in fact, the unaffordable care act for most, the President and his party's candidate to succeed him say the answer is greater government control—a public option. Folks, that is government health care. That is what we are talking about. The failings of ObamaCare cannot be cor-

rected with more government intervention, more restrictions, and more regulations.

We must triage the pain this law is inflicting on hard-working Americans. We must repeal and we must replace this law. I know that many colleagues will join me in continuing to work to provide freedom from its mandates and increased taxes to all and enact reforms to our health care system that will actually lower the cost of coverage and increase access to care for individuals.

Simply put, this law is failing. It is our job to correct it, and we will continue fighting to do so.

I was talking about this matter in the cloakroom just moments ago. Several of our Members have been very active in this whole endeavor to try to not only repeal but to replace this law, and they pause a little bit and say: You know, maybe this law was designed to fail. Maybe this law is so bad in terms of falling apart that people could not help but know that and then come in and say that the only thing we can now move to is national health care, government-run health insurance. If that is true, that is a 6-year effort with a lot of pain and suffering and in terms of political deceit, probably ranks right at the top.

We have to repeal this law. We have to replace it. We have to get to work. And we have to prevent further steps toward national health insurance.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

#### WRDA

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I rise to speak about legislation that is currently on the floor, the Water Resources Development Act.

I start by thanking a great legislative team of opposites who come together—and when they do they get things done—that is, Senator INHOFE, the chair of the committee, and the ranking member, Senator BOXER. I thank both of them for tireless effort, including their staffs for bringing forward something that is very important to my home State but important to communities all across the country. I also want to thank our two leaders for coming together and finding a way to have a path forward that allows us to come to the bill without a vote on a motion to proceed, and that involves all of our colleagues wanting to work together and that is evident on this bill and I very much appreciate everybody's efforts.

This comes after the Environment and Public Works Committee approved the Water Resources Development Act by 19 to 1 in the committee. Clearly, there is very strong bipartisan support, and it comes because the water infrastructure needs of the country are so great for every community, every State. I know the distinguished Presiding Officer would be able to tell the same story in North Dakota.

I particularly want to focus on one part—and then I will speak more broadly about the bill—but the part that deals with lead exposure and lead in water, which is very important to me, as colleagues know, and very important to a community called Flint, MI, where 100,000 people, through no fault of their own, were exposed to excessive levels of lead. There are efforts going on now to try to fix that, and we will focus on the long-term health and nutrition needs of the children and families, but the water is still not fixed.

People have said to me: Gosh, that was really bad what happened before in Flint. I say: No, no, it is not what happened in Flint, it is still happening. There are still bottles of water being delivered to homes, and people have been waiting. So we are grateful to be at this point, and there certainly is a sense of urgency coming from families in Flint and all around Michigan as well.

More than one-half million preschool students in the United States are exposed to elevated lead levels. So this is an issue not only in Flint but in schools and other parts of Michigan, where the drinking fountains in the school—you know, when you are walking down the hall and see the drinking fountain in the school is shut down because of high lead exposure, that has happened in schools across the country.

We have a particular concern because there are 9,000 children under the age of 6, not counting all the children in school, who have elevated lead levels. It is quite frightening because some of the homes in Flint actually have registered levels higher than a toxic waste dump. It is pretty scary and incredibly important that we support their efforts to get the pipes replaced as quickly as possible.

The cost of lead exposure goes far beyond the \$50 billion a year Americans have to pay in health care and in bottled water and all of the other health issues. Having unsafe water costs us our well-being, the health of the communities, economic development. It costs us a sense of dignity. As Americans, we think one of the basic rights that we don't think about—we just take it for granted that you are going to turn on the faucet and clean water is going to come out and you can drink it. That sense of basic confidence in infrastructure has been shaken in Flint but also in other communities across the country. That is something we are addressing in this bill that is so very important.

I am very pleased we have a bill in front of us that will comprehensively not only address a community that we have been fighting for and care deeply about but other communities around Michigan and around the country. We need the funding in this bill—the authorization in this bill because of a number of reasons. Let me again—speaking about lead, there are 5,300

American cities that have been found to be in violation of Federal lead rules. So there are 5,300 cities right now that we know don't meet the standards for safety. In USA TODAY they reported that excessive lead has been detected in nearly 2,000 public water systems across all 50 States. This is an important bill, and it addresses something that not only I have been focused on and my colleague Senator PETERS has been focused on but I know other colleagues are focusing on in communities in their States.

Frankly, there is no safe level of lead exposure and even a small amount can harm people over their lifetime. One study from Rhode Island found a correlation between even the lowest levels of lead exposure and declines in reading scores. There are certainly many other studies.

When we look at what is happening in this bill, the first thing I am very pleased to say is that we have a provision that helps our communities that have literally been shut down, not only families with bottled water, but can you imagine being a downtown restaurant and we have economic development going on downtown and all of a sudden people don't want to come because they are worried the restaurant is using contaminated water. In fact, it is totally safe to come to downtown Flint, and they are making great efforts on economic development and revitalization. I was pleased to host the SBA Administrator a number of months ago, talking with small business entrepreneurs who are excited about being in Flint.

When we look at the broad ripple effect when a water system isn't safe, it is most importantly about families and children, but it also affects small businesses and it affects the entire economy. So in this bill, we are very pleased we have a provision fully paid for by phasing out another program that will help address this.

We also address lead contamination in communities across the country. There is a very important loan program that was put in place by the chairman and ranking member in the last WRDA bill but not activated, not funded, that we fund that will activate loans—\$800 million, possibly more, in loans available for communities all across the country. The structure was set up in the last WRDA bill and now in this one we are actually funding it. So communities can activate very important loans to upgrade their water infrastructure.

We also know that when we are looking at issues around lead contamination, we see across the country drinking water issues in 22 percent of the homes in Jackson, MS, were found to exceed the Federal action lead levels. I remember the Mayor of Jackson saying to pregnant moms and children: Don't drink the water.

It is not just water. There are 37 million housing units in the United States that contain lead-based paint. Even

though we have come a long way, we have addressed lead-based paint, but we still have problems there in older homes that are still affecting children.

Soil is another issue, and certainly those of us who work with our farmers understand that as a critical resource in growing our food in East Chicago, IN, some show lead levels up to 227 times above the Federal lead limits and 135 times above the arsenic limit. It is pretty tough to be growing things when you have that kind of contamination in the soil.

The top 6 inches of soil had up to 30 times more lead than the level considered safe for children. Atlantic City, Philadelphia, Allentown, Pennsylvania, where over 500,000 children have enough lead in their blood to merit a visit to the doctor.

In this bill, we provide resources as well to address issues related to public health and lead in children. We know that for the 286 million Americans who get their tapwater from community water systems, this bill is an incredibly important investment in many different ways. It is necessary for public health and safety, it is necessary for economic development, and communities across America will benefit from this.

I also thank the committee for once again focusing on something else we in Michigan care about—the Great Lakes. We are surrounded. We have the peninsula surrounded by water and great beauty. Another wonderful summer we just had, where boating, fishing, and tourism is a very important part of our economy as well as a way of life. In this bill, for the first time, we established the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, formally in law, and it will authorize \$300 million for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative over the next 5 years. This is important for all of us in the Great Lakes State. It is also important because 27 percent of the world's freshwater comes from the Great Lakes. So it is a very important economic resource for all of us.

This bill also authorizes new programs to help with drought by promoting innovative water technology and research, for desalinization and water reuse and recycling.

It authorizes very important Army Corps projects. There are 25 critical Army Corps projects in 17 different States that are authorized in this legislation. These are authorizations for infrastructure projects that protect and address concerns in communities in South Carolina, Florida, New Jersey, and Louisiana, where we know about the hurricane and storm damage, and flood control projects in Texas, Missouri, Kansas, and California. There are environmental restoration projects in Oregon and in Washington State.

There are additional dam improvement programs, new programs that allow FEMA to help rehabilitate high-hazard potential dams. America's 84,000 dams are rapidly aging, and 14,000 of them are considered high risk, high

hazard. We have about 88 of those dams in Michigan that are considered high hazard.

So this is a bill that touches every single State. I know Members across the aisle have worked on this together. Clearly, it is something that is very important to Michigan, very important to families in Michigan. The piece that allows us to support the 100,000 people in Michigan is incredibly important for us, but we also understand that in the process of legislating, we have been able to support efforts and needs around the country and come together to do something that is important for communities in all of our States.

I think that is what legislating is all about, as the Presiding Officer knows. You and I have worked together on many different projects that try to address concerns across the country.

Again, I thank the chairman and ranking member for doing an outstanding job, for supporting our efforts but also supporting efforts of other Members. Hopefully, as we work our way through this process, we can come together on commonsense amendments that relate to this bill so we can have a very big vote on final passage and send it to the House, and hopefully our colleagues in the House will recognize how important this is to their districts and their States as well, and we will be able to get this to the President as soon as possible.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

**HONORING CORPORAL MONTRELL JACKSON, DEPUTY BRAD GARAFOLA, AND OFFICER MATTHEW GERALD**

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, I rise today to honor three brave men: Corporal Montrell Jackson, Deputy Brad Garafola, and Officer Matthew Gerald.

It has been a tough summer in Louisiana. Not only did we have the floods of which I spoke yesterday, but we had the Alton Sterling shooting, the civil unrest afterwards, and then these three officers killed and several others shot. I will speak today to these officers.

On July 17, the three men I just mentioned gave their lives while protecting our community when ambushed while reporting to a 9-1-1 call. Deputy Nick Tullier, Deputy Bruce Simmons, and Officer Chad Montgomery were injured during this attack. Thankfully, Deputy Simmons and Officer Montgomery have returned home to their families, but Deputy Tullier remains in the hospital. Please keep him in your thoughts and prayers.

Speaking of those who died, Corporal Jackson was a 10-year veteran of the Baton Rouge Police Department, a loving husband to his wife Trenisha, and a father to his 4-month-old child, Mason. Following the shooting of Mr. Alton Sterling, Montrell wrote on his Facebook page:

I personally want to send prayers out to everyone affected by this tragedy. These are